

Senate Bill 32

By: Senators Buckner of the 44th, Ramsey, Sr. of the 43rd, Stoner of the 6th and Mullis of the 53rd

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Code Section 32-6-50, of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 uniform regulations governing the erection and maintenance of traffic-control devices and
3 the placement, removal, defacement, damaging, or sale of devices, so as to authorize the
4 Department of Transportation to establish rules and regulations for the prevention or
5 reduction of occurrences of dangerous traffic congestion caused by a high volume of vehicles
6 exiting the interstate highway at certain locations during peak traffic times; to provide for
7 other related matters; to provide an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
8 purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

11 The General Assembly finds, determines, and recommends as follows:

12 (1) There is a need in this state to reduce the number of traffic related injuries and deaths
13 by decreasing traffic congestion on interstate highways caused by a high volume of
14 vehicles exiting the highway at certain locations during peak traffic times;

15 (2) Decreasing or preventing traffic stopped on controlled access highways due to
16 backed up exit ramps will also lower emissions, improve air quality, and increase the
17 quality of life for Georgians;

18 (3) An example of unnecessarily dangerous traffic congestion caused by vehicles
19 routinely stopping on the interstate highway occurs immediately adjacent to this state's
20 capitol where vehicles are exiting off of Interstate 20 onto Capitol Avenue during peak
21 morning hours;

22 (4) During such peak traffic hours, northbound traffic on Capitol Avenue between
23 Interstate 20 and the state capitol moves extremely slowly, causing congestion throughout
24 the capitol hill area and further affecting traffic on Interstate 20 and the exit ramp onto
25 Capitol Avenue;

(5) Also, during these hours, the three southbound lanes of Capitol Avenue have extremely little traffic; moreover, upon reaching the capitol and proceeding further northbound on Piedmont Avenue, there are three or more northbound lanes at all times; therefore, Capitol Avenue constitutes an unnecessary choking point for northbound traffic;

(6) It appears highly likely that the conversion of at least one southbound lane on Capitol Avenue to a northbound lane, either during morning peak traffic hours or permanently, could greatly improve traffic flow throughout the capitol hill area and on Interstate 20 without impacting safety or having other adverse effects;

(7) This unnecessarily stalled traffic not only contributes to air pollution, causes lost workforce productivity, and erodes the quality of life for Georgians, it creates a life-threatening hazard to motorists which could easily be reduced or eliminated; and

(8) Situations such as this should be avoided, and the department should be charged with the responsibility of taking action and leading the way for reducing such unnecessary incidents of traffic congestion on our interstate highways system.

SECTION 2.

Code Section 32-6-50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to uniform regulations governing the erection and maintenance of traffic-control devices and the placement, removal, defacement, damaging, or sale of devices, is revised by adding a new subsection to read as follows:

"(f) It shall be the responsibility of the department to promulgate uniform rules, regulations, and policies governing the placement and maintenance of traffic signals, road markings, and other traffic-control devices, including lane designations, in such a manner so as to prevent or reduce the occurrence of traffic stopping on the interstate highways due to congestion at exits during peak traffic hours. The department shall have authority to enter into agreements with local governing authorities or take additional measures as deemed necessary by the board to prevent or lessen the occurrence of vehicles backing up onto interstate highways during peak traffic hours. The department shall establish pilot projects to provide for the initial application of rules, regulations, and policies adopted pursuant to this subsection, including but not limited to the location affecting traffic exiting off Interstate 20 onto Capitol Avenue during peak morning hours. The department shall take all reasonable action to prevent the occurrence of traffic stopping on the interstate highway due to traffic congestion at such location, including but not limited to redesignating lanes during peak traffic hours for increased usage by northbound traffic on Capitol Avenue."

61 **SECTION 3.**

62 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
63 without such approval.

64 **SECTION 4.**

65 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.